

Enhancing learning using authentic artefacts (0319)

Louise Taylor, Michael McCann
Nottingham Trent University, UK

A common problem in education is that many students fail to see the real-world application of the concepts they are learning and lose motivation (Chulkov and Nizovtsev, 2015). This experience deters their engagement, limiting their scholarship and attainment levels. This is a common issue across subject areas. Through their Trent Institute for Learning and Teaching sabbaticals, the presenters, one from Law and the other from Economics, have been investigating using authentic learning and assessment experiences to encourage engagement and scholarship in their respective fields.

One presenter is developing the use of portfolios for learning and assessment in order to encourage engagement and scholarship in an undergraduate Law module. This will involve the use of authentic learning and assessment experiences for students by providing them with seminar materials in the form of a case file containing witness statements, scenes of crime photographs, transcription or audio recordings of 999 calls etc. Students will then need to scaffold their scholarship around these artefacts in order to make sense of them and to draw conclusions in relation to the task set.

The other presenter is developing the use of finance software in teaching, learning and assessment to stimulate interest and scholarship in an undergraduate Economics module. The software enables the use of real-time data to demonstrate the interaction of news and financial markets live. By being able to see and then practice the application of models using such contemporary data, they are drawn into the learning process. They develop skills in the research and analysis of economic and financial data in order to understand what they are observing.

The research done in relation to other disciplines (medicine in particular) offers significant support for the use of authentic learning and assessment strategies in order to better prepare students for their future professional lives (McMullen et al., 2003; Kazemi, 2013) and for the use of portfolios to heighten engagement, scholarship (Driessen & Van Der Vleuten, 2000) and attainment (Hammer, 1999). However, the literature also indicates several considerations that should be taken on board before adopting authentic learning and assessment strategies, and these include: the time needed to create new materials (Hammerness et al., 2005; Trevitt, Macduff & Steed, 2014), the tensions involved in using portfolios to facilitate learning as well as assessment (Snyder, Lippincott & Bower, 1998; Van Tartwijk & Driessen, 2009; McMullen et al., 2003), and the resources needed to manage student and staff anxiety associated with the adoption of new modes of learning and assessment (Van Tartwijk & Driessen, 2009; Mason, Pegler & Weller (2004).

In this paper the presenters will reflect on the literature that underpins their approaches and offer insights into the use of authentic artefacts in their chosen fields. This will include the presentation of some of the authentic artefacts live during the session to expose delegates to the engaging experiences that we have developed for our students. The paper will also include the discussion of empirical data originating from the first student cohorts subjected to this approach in Economics, and from focus groups held with tutors in Law.

References:

- Chuklov, D. and Nitzovtsev, D. (2015) 'Problem-based learning in managerial economics with an integrated case study', *Journal of Economics and Economics Education Research*, 16: 188-197
- Driessen & Van Der Vleuten (2000) 'Matching student assessment to problem-based learning: Lessons from experience in a law faculty', *Studies in Continuing Education* 22(2): 235-248.
- Hammer (1999) 'Integrating interdisciplinary perspectives into traditional environmental law courses', *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 23(3): 367-380.
- Hammerness et al (2005) 'How teachers learn and develop', in Darling-Hammond et al (eds.) *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kazemi, H. (2013) 'Using Bloomberg to teach economics'. Research Note, *International Advanced Economics Research*, 19: 311-312.
- Mason, Pegler & Weller (2004) 'E-portfolios: An assessment tool for online courses', *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 35(6): 717-727.
- McMullen et al (2003) 'Portfolios and assessment of competence: A review of the literature.' *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 41(3): 283-294.
- Snyder, Lippincott & Bower (1998) 'The inherent tensions in the multiple uses of portfolios in teacher education', *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 25: 45-60.
- Trevitt, Macduff & Steed (2014) '[E]portfolios for learning and as evidence of achievement: Scoping the academic practice development agenda ahead,' *Internet and Higher education*, 20: 69-78.
- Van Tartwijk & Driessen (2009) 'AMME guide no. 45: Portfolios for assessment and learning', *Medical Teacher* 31: 790-801.